



NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS,
CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO AND SYLVIA

MINUTES

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
January 24, 2018 (Wednesday), 1:00 p.m.
Cordelia Camp Building, Room 143, WCU
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Call to order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m.

Members in attendance: Laura Bowers, Dale Collins, Gareth Daley, Darlene Fox, Ron Mau, Mark Jones, Kathy Korb, Megan Orr, Vick Patel, Ann Self (arrived late), Julie Spiro, Bob Williams.

Members absent: Stephanie Edwards

Others in attendance: Heather Baker, Attorney; Joyce Pope (minutes); Robert Jumper.

Public Comment - none

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Gareth Daley moved to approve the agenda; Mark Jones seconded. Motion carried.

Recognize Vice Chair and Secretary

Kathy Korb and Laura Bowers were recognized. They had no reports at this time.

Review and approval of November & December 2017 Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the two previous TDA meetings.

MOTION: Megan Orr moved to approve the November 15, 2017 and December 5, 2017 minutes. Daley seconded. Motion carried.

Review and approval of November & December, 2017 Financial Reports

Darlene Fox presented the Financial Reports for November and December 2017.

November 15, 2017 Financial Report: room collections totaled \$143,560.73 with \$680 in penalties; YTD collection total was \$564,552.83, or 52.12% of budget. 159 units reported for October rentals. Collections were up 24.80% over 2016. The total increase for the fiscal year is 5.85%, with a cash balance on November 30, 2017 of \$670,767.15. Expenses for November were \$66,181.17 with YTD expenses of \$468,128.20. Encumbrances were \$15,881.55 for a combined total of \$483,946.74, or 42.28% of budget.

December 5, 2017 Financial report: Room collections totaled \$84,704.30 with \$50 collected in penalties. YTD collection total was \$647,628, or 59.97% of budget. 148 units reported for November rentals. Collections were down 5.75% from the same period in 2016. There was a 4.43% total increase for the fiscal year. The cash balance on December 31, 2017 was \$673,554.70 with expenses of \$82,189.91. YTD expenses totaled \$550,318.11 with encumbrances of \$13,589.35, for a combined total of \$563,907.46, or 49.27% of budget.

Fox also presented information on the Airbnb market. Airbnb totals were \$5,917 for November and \$5,555 for December.

MOTION: *Mark Jones made a motion to approve the November 15, 2017 and December 5, 2017 financial reports as presented. Bowers seconded.*

Executive Director Breedlove presented a suggested budget amendment to the Tourism Development Fund. Changes are suggested for increased in expenditures for travel (\$2656), telephone (\$1948), utilities (\$1281), and solar eclipse promotion (\$4380) for a total increase in expenses of \$10,265 in the Tourism Development Fund.

MOTION: *Ann Self moved to approved the budget amendment increasing the aforementioned expenditures by \$10,265 and increasing the Fund Balance by the same amount. Orr seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

Approve 2018-19 Grant program revisions and set workshop dates for applicants

Grant program revisions had been discussed in prior TDA meeting. Revisions include:

- Allowing Jackson County government to be eligible for the grant program, since county events can act as a tourist draw. The county would have to meet the same criteria as all applicants, showing that they are bringing in room nights with the event. As always, all application decisions are made by the grant committee.
- Adding C3 and C6 designations as eligible applicants
- Standardizing maximum grant amounts, eliminating differentiation between cities/townships and non-profits.
- State that the festival must occur within Jackson County
- Require an IRS determination letter to verify nonprofit status
- Require any social media buys be handled by the JCTDA's social agency
- An evaluation checklist is included as are checkboxes to determine how payments are to be made (directly to vendor or as reimbursement).
- Grant workshop dates are set for February 16, 10:00 – 11:00 am in Sylva, and February 23, 10:00 – 11:00 am in Cashiers

MOTION: *Ann Self made a motion to approve the aforementioned changes to the grant application. Daley seconded. Motion carried.*

Referral of UNC SOG Suggested Rules and Procedures, and policies modification, to Personnel & Governance

Based on recommendations from our attorney, Heather Baker, the TDA will consider moving from following Robert's Rules of Order to following the University of North Carolina School of Government's Suggested Rules of Procedure for Small Government Boards. Baker gave the board a brief overview of the difference between the two sources. The UNC SOG rules are particularly targeted to government entities that must comply with open meetings law, and is easier to follow. The SOG rules refer to Robert's Rules for anything that it does not specifically cover.

The board had in December 2017 adopted revised bylaws (which contain many operating procedures) however, the item was not on the agenda, and thereby nullified. In research by Baker, it was

subsequently determined that much of the bylaws are contained in the establishing resolution (R12-34), so there's no need for a separate set of bylaws.

Executive Director Breedlove recommended that the Personnel and Government Committee go through the UNC SOG book to ensure it fits the needs of the TDA, and to identify where modification or specificity is needed. Breedlove included a generic conflict of interest policy and a conflict of interest policy related to tourism for the committee to consider. The committee is asked to bring their recommendations to the board at the March meeting.

Appoint Executive Committee and establish meeting dates

Patel asked Ann Self to serve as head of the personnel committee and Megan Orr to serve as head of the Marketing Committee. Both accepted their positions. Patel stated board members could attend Executive Board meetings as a non-participant if they would like. Meetings are held at the TDA office in Sylva each month the week before the regular full board meeting at 1:00 pm, and last about an hour. Further, a meeting may not be required each month. If that is the case, members will be notified of the cancellation. Breedlove provided a proposed Executive Committee meeting schedule to the board. The Executive Committee agreed to meet on the suggested dates.

Patel asked Laura Bowers, Mark Jones, and Stephanie Edwards to serve on the Grant Review committee.

Refer Visitor Center declines to Executive Committee for recommendation

Breedlove analyzed the last two years' worth of in person visits and phone calls from both Chambers, who are contracted to operate Visitor Centers.

Cashiers

	Visits	Deviation from Prior Yr	Phone Calls	Deviation from Prior Yr
2014	3713		2485	
2015	4676	26%	3004	21%
2016	3903	-17%	2902	-3%
2017	1875	-52%	1482	-49%

Sylva*

	Visits	Deviation from Prior Yr	Phone Calls	Deviation from Prior Yr
2014	18456		5221	
2015	19629	6%	7218	38%
2016	16190	-18%	5079	-30%
2017	14063	-13%	4032	-21%

*does not include Dillsboro Visitor Center visits

Breedlove has already made improvements on the website for Visitor Centers and requested the NCDOT study signage. Since year-to-year declines are concerning, Breedlove has asked the Executive Committee to consider the issue. The Executive Committee will meet on February 14 to discuss the decline and next steps. The Executive Committee will bring their findings and recommendations back to the full board for discussion/action.

Jackson County Chamber Director's report

Julie Spiro provided the board with a printed report. Since the analytics are emailed each month to board members, Spiro's report highlighted current projects of the Chamber, including:

- Aesthetic updates are under way at the Center (at their cost) such as landscaping, feather flags, music, and signage.
- The Chamber is looking for branded opportunities for which to create merchandise (such as Concerts on the Creek, Hook Line and Drinker, etc.) and will do paid social media marketing to advertise the products available in the Chamber office. All products will be designed to avoid competing with local businesses.
- A new dining guide came out last month in print and is available in the Chamber office.
- Coming soon:
 - A 'pet porch' is being created that will contain information on pet-friendly businesses and accommodations; it will include a sitting area and a pet area.
 - Concerts on the Creek bookings are almost complete.
 - July 4th fireworks are being planned.
- Next month's STIR event is cohosted with the Cashiers Area Chamber. Spiro invited the board to attend the January STIR event at 828Escape. Spiro also provided the board with her business card and invited them to contact her with any questions.

Cashiers Chamber Director Stephanie Edwards was not able to attend the meeting. Breedlove presented highlights of her report:

- Sapphire Valley Resort had a record Christmas, most likely due to the colder weather. This year broke every record for Christmas week.
- Edwards and Breedlove attended the TWSA board meeting. The Horsepasture River Wastewater Treatment plant funding letter was approved.
- Workforce regional development summit planning is underway. This summit will give the attendees the opportunity to seek a collaborative solution for the challenges they face. Cashiers is relatively unique in their workforce needs and development, particularly in recruiting, retaining, and housing. A stakeholder list was created which includes Southwestern Community College, Region A RPO Workforce, Land of Sky MPO, Cashiers Chamber of Commerce, WCU Tourism, Jackson County Economic Development Director Rich Price, industry leaders, Lonesome Valley, High Hampton, Don Adams, Mickey Luker, housing contacts, NC Works (ESC), and the TDA. The meeting will take place March 1st from 10am-12pm.
- Brunch bill: County Commissioners will meet March 19 in Sylva, and in April in Cashiers, to discuss the brunch bill.
- The Cashiers Chambers is very appreciative of the upgraded technology for their phones and computers.

Executive Director's Report

- Map updates:
 - A proof of the Sylva map was presented to the board. The map is a two-sided, wayfinding map with no individual businesses listed, so as to be evergreen. The reverse side contains history, dining, and shopping information. The maps should be available in the Visitor Centers in six to eight weeks.

- The hiking and waterfall map re-design includes several improvements, such as a more logical ordering of the waterfalls. The business listings were updated, and Visitor Center and social media information was added.
- The Cashiers Area attractions and waterfall map is in process.
- Great Balsam Relay: Due to a competing race in Transylvania County, the race format will change. The race will combine canoeing and biking and is no longer a USARA qualifier. The event starts Friday and ends Saturday around 9:00 pm. Breedlove asked the board for consensus to continue with the funding for this event. The board concurred.
- February Board Orientation meeting will take place February 21 at 11:30am. Lunch will follow. Chris Cavanaugh with Magellan Strategy Group is conducting this session at no charge to our board.
- “Three Billboards” continues to receive accolades, including seven Academy Award nominations. The film has already received Golden Globe and SAG awards. Breedlove has created a walking tour of downtown Sylva for “Three Billboards” that will be publicized.
- A marketing meeting will take place on February 20 in the TDA office. The meeting will include a presentation from Rawle Murdy, Pineapple and then end with discussion about the Visitors Guide. Another marketing meeting is tentatively set for April 30.
- Breedlove made contact with Jackson County Public Works and NCDOT to address the litter issue along Scotts Creek. Trout Unlimited is sponsoring a litter cleanup on January 27.
- The TDA has partnered with the Cashiers Area Chamber on literature displays that are weatherproof. Director Edwards feels that if these displays are placed strategically around the community, they will encourage visitors to pick up the literature. The Cashiers Chamber proposed that the TDA share the cost of seven displays, at around \$800 per share. The displays will have the Cashiers logo and the TDA logo. The Jackson County Chamber is interested in similar boxes, to be discussed later in the spring.

MOTION: Self moved that the TDA share the expense of the information boxes with the Cashiers Area Chamber and Jackson County Chamber. Jones seconded. Motion carried.

Breedlove gave several items of positive news to the board:

- Our State Magazine is photographing Lulu’s on Main this afternoon. They have been sending photographers to Jackson County throughout the year to a variety of locations. The most recent issue has coverage of the Jackson County airport. Fly fishing will be featured in an upcoming issue.
- STR numbers for December show Jackson County with an increase of 15% in occupancy and 14.9% in revenue, more than all neighboring counties. Winter hotel stays have been very strong this year, which should have a positive impact on the budget.
- Lastly, Breedlove is working with Fox on the 2018-19 budget. He will also update the Board roster.

Jones made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 2:04pm.

Laura Bowers, Secretary
Jackson County TDA Board

Approved: February 21, 2018